

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO GILLNET VESSEL OWNERS

Effective August 1, 2002

General gillnet vessel designation and tagging requirements

Currently, all vessels issued a limited access NE multispecies permit and intending to fish under a Northeast (NE) multispecies days-at-sea (DAS) with gillnet gear must obtain an annual designation as either a Day or Trip gillnet vessel. Declarations are to be made on a form provided by NOAA Fisheries and signed by the vessel owner or authorized representative. This form is enclosed. It can also be obtained by calling the Northeast Regional Permit Office at (978) 281-9370, or through the Northeast Regional Office's web site (listed at the end of this letter). Once a declaration form has been received, NOAA Fisheries will send a letter to the vessel owner that serves as written confirmation from the Regional Administrator that the vessel is a Day or Trip gillnet vessel. This confirmation letter must be retained on board the vessel when fishing under a NE multispecies DAS with gillnet gear.

Although in prior years a vessel owner could not change the Day or Trip designation, for the 2002 fishing year, a vessel which has elected a Day or Trip gillnet designation may change the designation prior to September 1, 2002. The vessel will then be authorized to fish under the new designation during the September 1, 2002, through April 30, 2003, period.

A vessel owner electing a Day or Trip gillnet declaration must indicate the number of gillnet tags that being requested on the above mentioned form provided by NOAA Fisheries, and provide a check for the cost of the tags. Day gillnet vessels will be authorized to obtain up to 160 gillnet tags an Trip gillnet vessels will be authorized to obtain up to 150 gillnet tags. A vessel may have tags on board the vessel that are in excess of the number of tags corresponding to the allowable number of nets for a given Regulated Mesh Area (RMA), provided such tags are onboard the vessel and can be made available for immediate inspection.

A gillnet vessel may stow additional nets on board that are in excess of the allowable nets for a given RMA, up to 160 nets for Day gillnet vessels, counting the number of deployed nets. Trip gillnet vessels are not restricted to the number of nets that can be stowed on board the vessel. All nets in excess of the allowable number of nets for a given RMA must be stowed according to the regulations.

In order to provide vessel owners with an opportunity to obtain gillnet tags, **the gillnet tagging requirements will be waived through August 31, 2002.**

general gillnet gear requirements:

For purposes of gillnet gear requirements, gillnets are defined as follows:

Roundfish gillnet

- a gillnet constructed with floats on the float line and no tie-down twine between the float line and the lead line.

Flatfish gillnet

- a gillnet constructed with no floats on the float line, or with floats on the float line and that has tie-down twine between the float line and the lead line not more than 48 inches in length and spaced not more than 15 feet apart.

When fishing under a NE multispecies DAS in:

Gulf Of Maine (GOM) RMA

Vessels that have obtained an annual Trip gillnet vessel designation and that are fishing under a NE multispecies DAS in the GOM RMA will be required to fish with nets having a minimum mesh size of 6.5-inch mesh and will be restricted to fishing 150 nets, with one tag fixed to each net.

Vessels that have obtained an annual Day gillnet vessel designation will be allowed to fish up to 100 nets, provided the vessel complies with the following restrictions:

1. When fishing with flatfish nets, vessels can fish no more than 100 nets, having a minimum mesh size of 7 inches, with one tag fixed to each net.
2. When fishing with roundfish nets, vessels can fish with no more than 50 nets, having a minimum mesh size of 6.5 inches, with two tags fixed to each net. Vessels may only fish with roundfish nets during July through February of each fishing year.

Vessels may fish any combination of roundfish and flatfish nets, provided that the total number of nets fished does not exceed 100.

Unless otherwise specified, the effective date for the mesh size requirements is August 1, 2002.

Georges Bank (GB) RMA

Vessels fishing under either a Day or Trip gillnet designation and that are fishing under a NE multispecies DAS in the GB RMA will be required to fish with nets having a minimum mesh size of 6.5 inches and will be restricted to fishing no more than 50 nets, with two tags fixed to each net. **The effective date of this mesh size requirement is August 15, 2002.**

Southern New England (SNE) RMA

Vessels fishing under either a Day or Trip gillnet designation and that are fishing under a NE multispecies DAS in the SNE RMA will be required to fish with nets having a minimum mesh size of 6.5 inches

and will be restricted to fishing no more than 75 nets, with two tags fixed to each net. **The effective date of this mesh size requirement is August 15, 2002.**

Mid-Atlantic (MA) RMA

Gillnet regulations when fishing under a NE multispecies DAS remain unchanged for this management area. That is:

1. Vessels that fish under a Day gillnet designation will continue to be authorized to fish up to 160 nets, provided that the vessel does not fish more than 80 roundfish nets. Roundfish and flatfish nets must have a minimum mesh size of 5.5-inch diamond or 6.0-inch square mesh, with roundfish nets having two tags fixed to each net, and flatfish nets having one tag fixed to each net.
2. Vessels that fish under a Trip gillnet designation are not limited to a restriction on the number of nets fished. All nets must have a minimum mesh size of 5.5-inch diamond or 6.0-inch square mesh.

The effective date for the mesh size requirements in the MA RMA is August 1, 2002.

Gillnet Vessels Fishing Under a Monkfish DAS

Starting August 1, 2002, vessels that hold:

1. A limited access monkfish Category C or D permitted vessels and that are fishing under a monkfish DAS will be restricted to using 150 nets in all areas, provided that the vessel fishes with nets having a minimum mesh size of 10 inches. Such vessels will also be required to attach one tag to each net.
2. A limited access monkfish Category A or B permit (i.e., vessel that does not hold a NE multispecies or Atlantic sea scallop) and that fishes under a monkfish DAS will be restricted to using 160 nets in all areas, provided that the vessel fishes with nets having a minimum mesh size of 10 inches. Such vessels will also be required to attach one tag to each net.

The effective date for the mesh size requirements is August 1, 2002.

Vessels fishing under the large mesh DAS program using gillnets

Vessels that hold a valid limited access NE multispecies Large Mesh Individual DAS category (Category F) or Large Mesh Fleet DAS category (Category G) permit will be required to fish with nets having a mesh size that is 2.0 inches larger than the current regulated mesh size when fishing under the NE multispecies DAS program. Therefore,

vessels fishing under a NE multispecies DAS with a valid Large Mesh DAS permit with sink gillnets will be required to fish with nets

having 8.5-inch square or diamond mesh when fishing in the GOM, GB, and SNE RMAs, and 7.5-inch diamond or 8.0-inch square mesh when fishing in the MA RMA. **Limited access NE multispecies vessels issued Large Mesh category permits will have until September 1, 2002, to comply with these new mesh size requirements.**

Gillnet Tag form must be completed if your vessel will be fishing with Gillnets under a Multispecies Days at Sea (DAS) or Monkfish DAS during the 2003 fishing year (May 1, 2003 - April 30, 2004).

- If you have a limited access multispecies permit or a limited access multispecies permit **and** a limited access monkfish permit, you must fill out Part 1 through Part 3.
- If you have a limited access monkfish permit only (and **no** limited access multispecies permit), you must fill out Part 2 and Part 3.

PART 1- Limited Access Multispecies permit holders who intend to use gillnet gear under a multispecies day-at-sea must declare into one of the following gillnet category designations by selecting a category: (please read the "Special Instructions to Gillnet Vessel Owners" if you do not know which category you should choose)

Trip Gillnet Category _____ or Day Gillnet Category _____

NOTE: Trip Category vessels are restricted to 150 tags and Day Category vessels are restricted to 160 tags.

PART 2

If you do not already own gillnet tags, you need to purchase them. Please indicate how many tags that you wish to purchase by filling out the following information. (Please read the "Special Instructions to Gillnet Vessel Owners" if you would like to learn more about gillnet tagging requirements.)

Number of tags requested _____ (Multispecies tags are limited to 160, Monkfish tags are limited to 150 @ \$1.15 each. (NOTE: An additional shipping and handling charge of \$5.00 must be included for orders of 20 or less tags). (NOTE: The total cost for 160 tags is \$ 184.00)

Total amount enclosed \$ _____

Name and Address _____

Phone Number _____

Please make checks payable to **National Band and Tag Company** and complete Part 3 below.
Initial Tags will be shipped to you directly from the tag manufacturer

PART 3

Vessel Name _____	Federal Permit # _____
Documentation # _____	
or State Registration # _____	Gillnet tags will be used to fish for:
Signature _____	Multispecies (circle) Yes No
Date _____	Monkfish (circle) Yes No

If you have any questions, please call the NMFS Northeast Regional Office information line at (978) 281-9278. Return this form and payment to:

NMFS Permits Office, Gillnet Program
 One Blackburn Drive
 Gloucester, MA 01930-2298

The information will be used in the management of the Northeast multispecies and monkfish fisheries. One of the regulatory steps taken by NMFS to carry out the conservation and management objectives of these fishery management plans is limiting fishing vessel effort. The application to designate a gillnet category and order gillnet tags is meant to allow industry members to designate their appropriate gillnet category and order the appropriate number of gillnet tags in accordance with 50 CFR §648.4(c)(2)(iii) and §648.82(k)(1)(i). Since this requirement has been adopted as part of the effort reduction programs under the Northeast Multispecies and Monkfish Fishery Management Plans, it is viewed as consistent with the conservation goals of these FMPs.

BURDEN STATEMENT: Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 5 minutes per response, including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or suggestions for reducing this burden to: Patricia A. Kurkul, Regional Administrator, Northeast Region, NMFS, 1 Blackburn Drive, Gloucester, MA 01930-2298; and to Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Washington, DC 20503.

The information collected on this form is not confidential and can be made available to the general public.

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